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HHS PROVIDES ENERGY ASSISTANCE FUNDS TO HELP LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt today announced \$100 million in emergency contingency funds to states, tribes and territories that will help families in need pay their heating and energy bills this winter. In addition, HHS will now make available up to 100 percent of states' remaining block grant funds -- which total \$633 million -- for a combined total of \$733 million in available resources. These funds are administered by the Administration for Children and Families through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

"These funds will make a positive difference for many low-income families," Secretary Leavitt said. "The Bush Administration is committed to helping those in need to ensure their homes are kept warm during the winter months."

HHS Assistant Secretary for Children and Families Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. added, "LIHEAP helps millions of America's most needy families maintain a healthy temperature in their homes. This aid is especially timely given relatively high fuel prices and continued cold temperatures throughout much of the nation."

In addition, the federal government has another \$101 million that remains available for crises through the emergency contingency fund.

Each year, almost 5 million low-income households across the country receive LIHEAP assistance. LIHEAP helps eligible families pay for home heating and insulation in winter and cooling their homes in the warmer months. States have already received \$1.3 billion in annual block grant funds in the first quarter of FY 2006 under a continuing resolution.

Individuals interested in applying for LIHEAP assistance should contact their local/state LIHEAP agency. For more information, go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap/> or <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap/brochure.html>.

To see the total amount given to each state from the emergency contingency fund, view: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2005/liheap_funding_0106.htm.

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